



# Children Missing Education Protocol

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## Introduction

Redbridge recognises that children missing from education (CME) comprise a group of vulnerable young people often with very distinct and complex needs. This protocol explains the process by which young people who are CME are identified, and re-engaged with education. It details Redbridge's commitment to address the local and wider concern regarding CME and has been developed as guidance for all professionals working with children and families, including statutory and voluntary groups, partner agencies, and the general public. It will:

- 1 Define Children Missing Education (CME)
- 2 Explain what to do if you suspect a child is missing education
- 3 Explain how children are monitored until re engaged in education

Redbridge is committed to promoting learning opportunities for all school age young people of this culturally rich and diverse community. We aim to ensure equity and equality for all children and young people attending school in this borough, and to ensure they are able fulfil their education aspirations by:

- Ensuring that all pupils who go missing, are lost from school in Redbridge or move to other areas are speedily located;
- Supporting other Local Authorities to locate their own missing/lost pupils, when such pupils move to Redbridge, and
- Supporting professionals - Health Workers, teachers, police officers, social workers and other child and family community agencies that have concerns for a child missing education or a child or children whose whereabouts are unknown

Redbridge seeks to achieve these aims by working in partnership with all agencies, to support the education and well being of young people who become CME. These procedures are linked to the School to School National pupil database (S2S) and are underpinned by the relevant statutory requirements relating to missing/lost pupils:

- The Education Act 1996 S436A (as Inserted by the Education and Inspections act 2006 Part 1 S4) states the duty of the local authority to identify children of compulsory school age in their area not receiving an education
- Department of Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England to Identify Children Not Receiving an Education (2015)
- The Children Act 2004 S11. The Education Act 2002 S175  
Local Authority duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- The Children Act 1989, S27. A Local Authority may request help from any other Local Authority and/or any other agency in exercising their duty to provide support and services to Children in need and that Local Authority Officers have a duty to gather information regarding concerns.

- The Education(pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006
- Pan London Child Protection Procedures 4<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014
- Education Act 2005 S116

Young people have a higher risk of becoming CME when they move across Local Authority boundaries, and certain life events make some children more vulnerable to missing education such as, but not limited to

- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Families fleeing domestic violence
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Children of Gypsy / Roma / Traveller background
- Children from highly mobile families eg. asylum seekers, or economic migrants
- Young people in the criminal justice system
- Children with long-term medical or emotional health problems
- Children in private fostering arrangements
- School aged parents
- Children of parents with learning difficulties or a mental health diagnosis

**“Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life” (Department of Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England to identify Children Not Receiving an Education) (2015)**

This protocol does not replace child protection procedure. Until superseded or revised The London Safeguarding Children’s Board Procedures 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Pan London procedures for Young People Missing from Care and Working together to safeguard Children revised statutory guidance are the relevant policies that should be referred to. [If, at any time in the procedures detailed in this document, a child is considered to be at risk of harm, the person with the concerns \*\*must\*\* make an \*\*immediate\*\* referral in accordance with the above procedures](#)

## Definitions

Redbridge define Children Missing Education (CME) as:

- A child of statutory school age (5-16) living in Redbridge not on roll at a registered school, or alternative provision;
- A child who has stopped attending school in Redbridge and moved away from their last known address with their destination unconfirmed or unknown, including those young people believed to have left the UK.

This **does not** include young people registered at a Redbridge education provision with poor attendance. Redbridge Education Welfare Service (or 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider employed by the school) works with young people under these circumstances.

## Children Missing from Home or Public Care

The CME procedure described here does not cover young people who abscond from home or local authority care. This is covered by The Department for Education Statutory guidance on children who runaway or go missing from home or public care (January 2014) and the London LSCB document Safeguarding Children Missing from Care and Home (2014) see [www.lscb.gov.uk](http://www.lscb.gov.uk). Redbridge also refers to the pan London child protection procedures 4<sup>th</sup> edition for dealing with young people in this situation. Stability of schooling is essential for children who are looked after by Local Authorities. Where children go missing from their care placement, they are rarely absent for long. It is important that their school place is kept open until there is an agreement between the school and the authority with responsibility for their care, that this place is no longer necessary.

## Specialist Workers

The aim of this document is to safeguard the welfare of children who become missing from education. Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (2015) requires all local authorities to have a named person responsible for receiving details of children found to be missing education. Redbridge has a Vulnerable Children's Officer and an Information Officer for Children Missing Education (CME Officers). If you wish to discuss any aspect of CME please contact them by phoning 0208 708 6047 0208 708 3838 or emailing [cme@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:cme@redbridge.gov.uk) These specialist workers are responsible for ensuring children missing from education are identified, monitored and tracked into an education placement.

All young people identified as CME are supported until the specialist workers are satisfied the child:

- Is confirmed on a school roll, or receiving alternative education whether by elective home education or at an alternative provision or
- Has reached a destination after leaving Redbridge (including outside the UK) and has been confirmed as receiving education or referred to the Local Authority or equivalent.  
or
- All reasonable steps have been satisfactorily conducted to locate the child including all appropriate safeguarding measures

## **Referral Pathway for Children Missing Education**

### **Young People Missing Education in Redbridge**

When a young person confirmed resident in Redbridge is believed to be CME, any authority, agency, or individual in contact with them are expected to refer using the Movement of Children Referral Form (Appendix A) sent electronically to CME@redbridge.gov.uk or by post to the address on the form.

The specialist workers role is to contact families and provide support and guidance where necessary to access the most appropriate education placement. If the parent/carer expresses a wish for elective home education (EHE), they will be advised to register online and to liaise with Redbridge's Behaviour and Inclusion Team.

In circumstances where it appears a mainstream school place may not be appropriate, the specialist workers will signpost the parent/carer to the relevant agencies.

All information is recorded centrally on CME databases, allowing the specialist workers to confirm the take up of education. All young people are monitored until they are confirmed on roll at a school/education provision, or in receipt of suitable education.

In cases where parent/carers have refused to accept a school place for their child, failed to send their child to the school they have accepted, or fail to engage regarding their child's education, Redbridge Standards Achievement and Inclusion Service will consider instigating legal proceedings via School Attendance Order action where appropriate. See also Appendix C Child in area believed to be missing education

### **Young People Leaving Redbridge**

It is the duty of the head teacher, school staff and governing body of any Redbridge school (including special schools, Academies and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) provisions) to refer directly to the CME team, any child leaving their establishment with no confirmed forwarding address or education, or children who fail to attend school after a leave of absence.

The school **must** make initial enquiries by telephoning the family or any emergency contacts. If this provides no answer, and provided there are no child protection concerns the school should write, or preferably conduct a home visit, to establish any further information. This should be carried out by school staff, their allocated Education Welfare Officer, or 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider of education welfare

services. For responsibilities and more detail see also Information and Guidance for schools on page 8.

If these checks fail to confirm a young person safe and in receipt of education the matter should be referred by the school directly to Redbridge CME officers using the CME Referral form (Appendix A)

**Where a child is subject of a Child Protection plan or has a named social worker, this person must be contacted by school staff immediately as well as considering a referral to the CME team.**

Redbridge CME officers will investigate further using all the information available. This next stage attempts to establish the young person(s) safe arrival in the named destination (where known) and confirm the take up of education thus limiting the opportunity for young people to go missing between education provisions.

Enquiries can include liaison with Local Authority's and partner agencies nationally, as well as social care, Police, benefit agencies, health, immigration and national border agencies and/or their counterparts abroad if felt necessary. This process continues as far as possible until satisfactory confirmation is received the young person is on roll at an education provision in the UK or referred to the appropriate agency abroad. CME officers may advise the school to remove the pupil(s) from roll after no less than 20 days unauthorised absence following all reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil except in the case of children subject to an Education Health Care plan, and Children Looked After who cannot be removed from roll until a new education provision has been established and confirmed.

If a Child Living Away from Home goes missing from their care placement in Redbridge, the relevant Social Worker will follow the guidance set out in the Children Missing from Care and Home Protocol. This requires them to liaise with the police in the area from where the child went missing to agree the strategy for finding the child, and provide any necessary support advising the Redbridge school and CME team as necessary. The Redbridge Lead Officer for The Virtual School deals specifically with education for Children Living Away from Home, accommodated by Redbridge. When these young people move between provisions, a CME referral is not required.

See also Appendix D Children Leaving a Redbridge School without a Destination

### Child Protection/Safeguarding

When a young person leaves Redbridge and it is known they or, a member of their family, have an allocated social worker (Redbridge or otherwise) this person will be considered the lead professional. They will be responsible for liaising with CME officers regarding any information about the young persons' whereabouts and education or for making further enquiries by contacting their colleagues and/or the police within the UK or abroad if necessary. When there are safeguarding concerns and no allocated key worker or lead professional, Redbridge CME Officers in liaison with appropriate local agencies will make every effort to contact social care colleagues and or the police in the known or suspected destination.

### Forced Marriage

Forcing someone to marry someone against their will is completely different to arranged marriage where both bride and groom consent to marrying each other. If it is suspected a young person in Redbridge is being forced into marriage, a referral should be made immediately to Redbridge social care. See also the Foreign and commonwealth office website [www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage](http://www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage)

#### When a child missing from education cannot be found

The majority of young people referred as CME are located and confirmed on roll at an education provision by the CME specialist workers. However if the young persons' whereabouts remain unknown after all enquiries have been exhausted the case will be closed, and noted to the Education Welfare Service Operations Manager as part of these procedures. If there are safeguarding concerns, the case would close only following a satisfactory conclusion in liaison with social care colleagues, the police and/or other agencies as appropriate. Closed cases are reviewed periodically to ensure any new information can be acted on that would allow a satisfactory conclusion to be reached.

### **Information and Guidance for Schools (Including all Academies and Independent schools)**

If a child leaves a Redbridge School without notice, or without notification which new school the child is to attend or, when the child is not confirmed on roll at a new provision, (including where the child moves abroad) the school **must** make all possible enquiries to establish the child or young person's whereabouts. See also Appendix B flowchart for schools regarding non-attendance.

**If the child is Subject to a Child Protection Plan or if the school have concerns the child may be at risk of harm, and/or an Early Intervention Panel Referral has been completed on the child, the school should also immediately notify the allocated Social Worker or complete a MARF as appropriate.**

In the first instance schools should attempt contact with the parents/carers using all phone numbers given on the child's personal files. If these are not available and provided there are no child protection concerns, the school should also write to the family at any known addresses making a clear record on the child's education file. If there is no response and after consultation with their Redbridge Education Welfare Officer or 3<sup>rd</sup> party Education welfare service provider the school must refer the matter directly to Redbridge CME specialist workers within 10 days. Where a child does not take up the allocated place at a school i.e. in-year admission, reception intake, or Year 6 to Year 7 transition the school must report these back to Redbridge Admission and awards team in the usual way.

#### When initial enquiries confirm the pupil on roll at a new school

When children leaving a borough school have a known educational placement, it is vital the discharging school should confirm this by liaising with the new school. An electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) of the pupil's records should then be sent to the new school via the School to School (S2S) secure transfer site. In such cases there is no need to make a CME referral.

#### Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parents intending to educate their children at home must by law inform the school their child is leaving. The discharging school should remove the child's name from the school admission register.



Parent/carers are encouraged to make an online notification to Redbridge of elective home education. The Behaviour and Inclusion EHE support officer will then arrange to visit the family to ensure the education being provided is suitable to meet the child's individual requirements according to his/her age ability, aptitude and with regard to any special educational need. The authority does not provide funds or materials of any kind for parent/carers to home educate. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate at home as a way of avoiding exclusion or addressing school based issues. For information regarding EHE, visit [www.redbridge.gov.uk](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk) following the link to children and schools/schools/home schooling.

#### When a child's whereabouts remain un- confirmed.

A CME referral should be made because

- initial enquiries cannot find the child and their family at the last known address, or
- The child cannot be confirmed on roll at a school or alternative provision, or
- The child/Family has left the UK

After 20 school days, If there are no identifiable concerns, the case has been discussed and agreed with the relevant Education Welfare Service provider, and a referral has been made to Redbridge CME team the pupil's name may be removed from the school roll **with the following exceptions**

- Children who have a statement of special educational needs or and Education Health care plan
- Children who are looked after who should be referred to the Redbridge Virtual school head teacher or equivalent if placed in Redbridge by another authority.

These children may only come off roll once a new education provision has been established and it is confirmed the child is attending there, irrespective of the above 20 day rule.

The school must then complete the Common Transfer Form (CTF) within a further 15 days of the child's name being removed from roll. Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Appendix 1) prescribe the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. When a pupil is deleted from the admission register the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for removal from roll and update their management information system (MIS)

Where the child's whereabouts remain unknown the CTF coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) must then be uploaded onto the School to School (S2S) database using 'unknown' as the destination school, so that the CTF will be logged in the Missing Child area.

#### **Independent Schools and Academies**

Independent schools in Redbridge are legally required to advise the local authority about the details of all children removed (as well as admitted) from the roll of their school. Independent schools and Academies are expected to follow the same procedure for maintained schools described here above and are also required to complete a CTF.

Appendix

- A Movement of Children Form
- B Flowchart for Schools Regarding Non Attendance
- C Child in Area Believed to be Missing Education
- D Children Leaving a Redbridge School without a destination
- E Notification of Children Leaving

**Appendix A**

**CME REFERRAL FORM**

Notification of Statutory School Aged Young Person Believed Missing from Education

**All sections must be appropriately completed for this referral to be accepted**  
**Please return completed form electronically to [cme@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:cme@redbridge.gov.uk)**

First Name					
Last Name					
Date of birth		Gender	Ethnicity as shown on School records		
Redbridge School		Statemented/SEN	Yes	No	
Sibling(s) First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Gender	Ethnicity as shown on school records	
Current Address (Where known)					

Previous Address			
Sibling(s) Address If different			
Responsible adult			
Contact Details	Phone Numbers		
	Email		
<b>Actions Taken To Locate Pupil</b>			
Please detail actions taken to locate this child or children			
	Date	By Whom	Outcome
Phone Calls/Texts			
Letters			
Home Visits			
Emails			

<b>Risk Assessment</b>	
Please provide any relevant detail/information for us to consider when making a home Visit	
<b>Additional Information</b>	
Please give details of any other relevant information that might help us locate this child or children	
Name of Referrer	

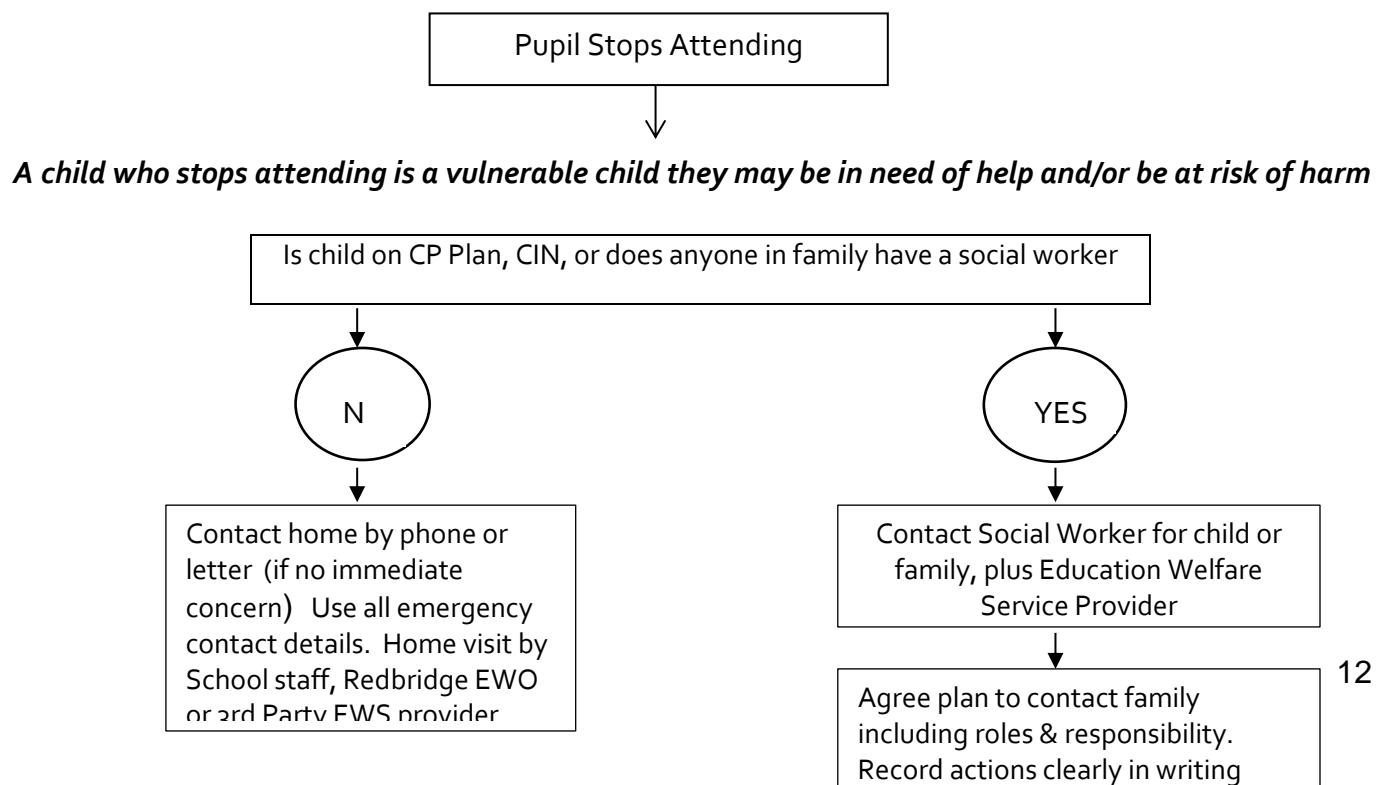


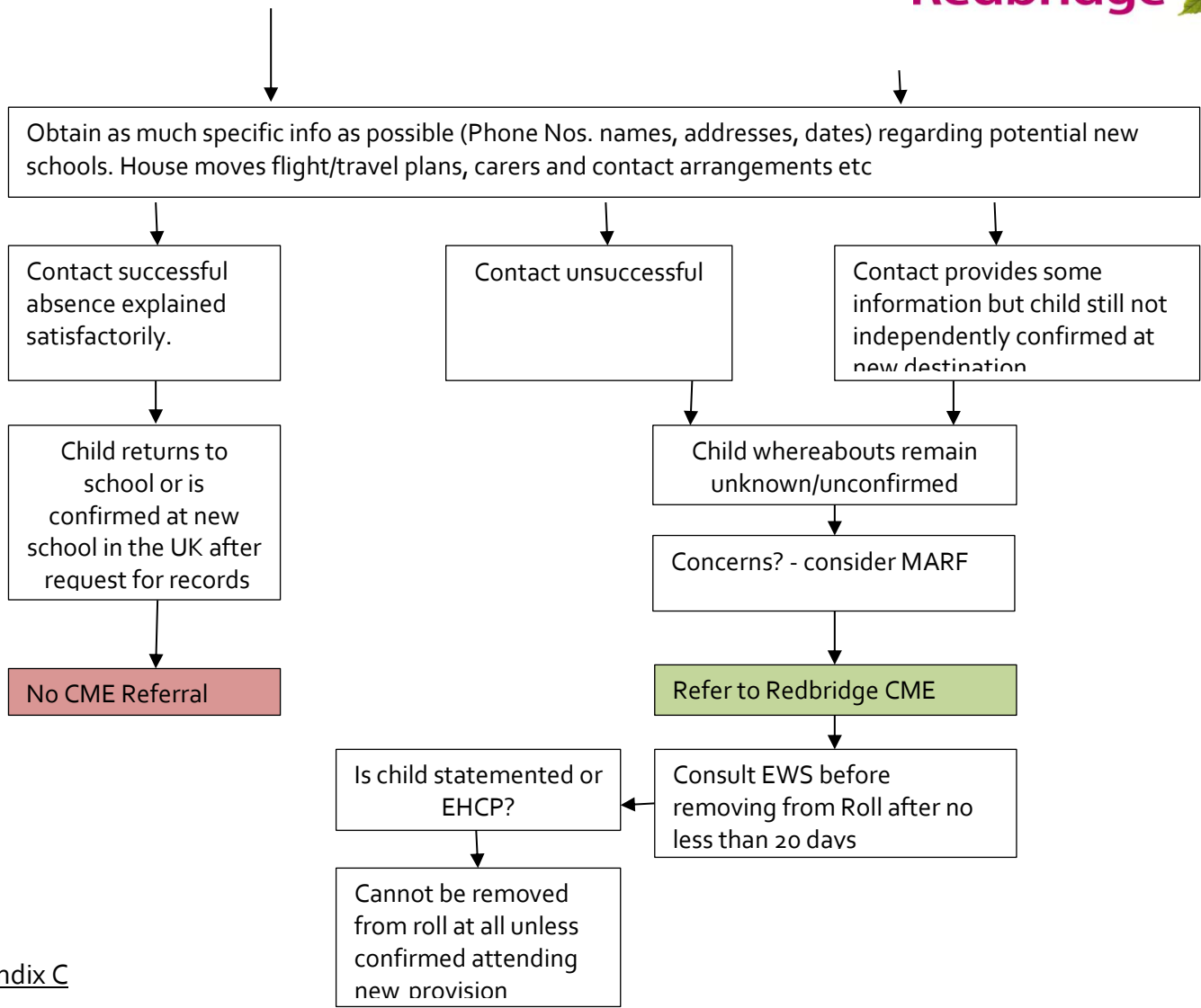
Agency/Service	
Address	
Email Address	
Phone No	

**Standards, Achievement and Inclusion Chris Hilliard – Chief Officer**  
 Education Welfare Service, Station Road Centre, Station Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1NB  
 In case of query please call: 0208 708 6047/0208 708 3838

## Appendix B

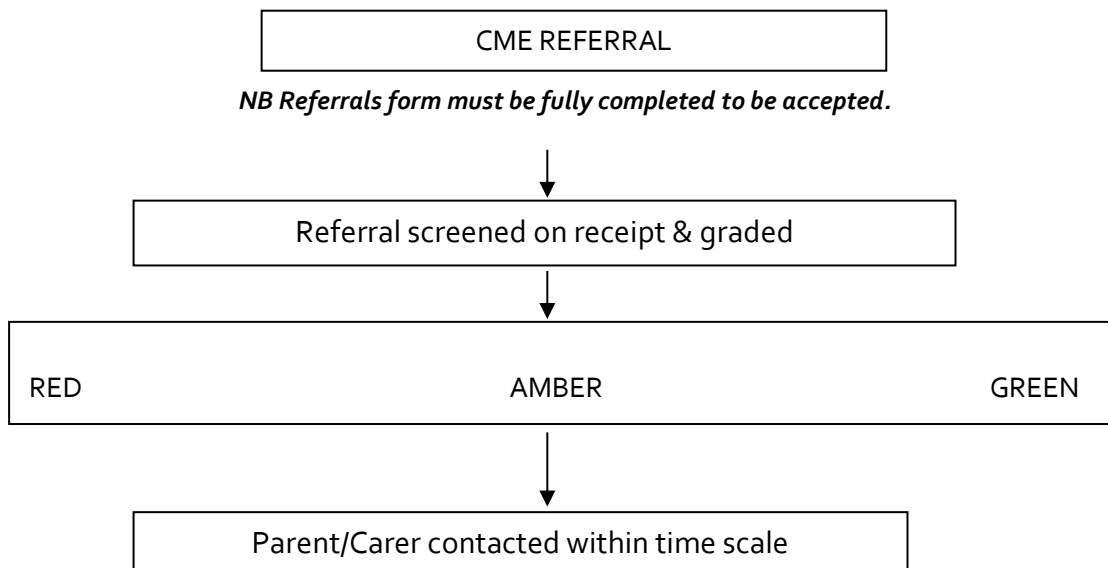
### Flow Chart For School's Regarding Non Attendance

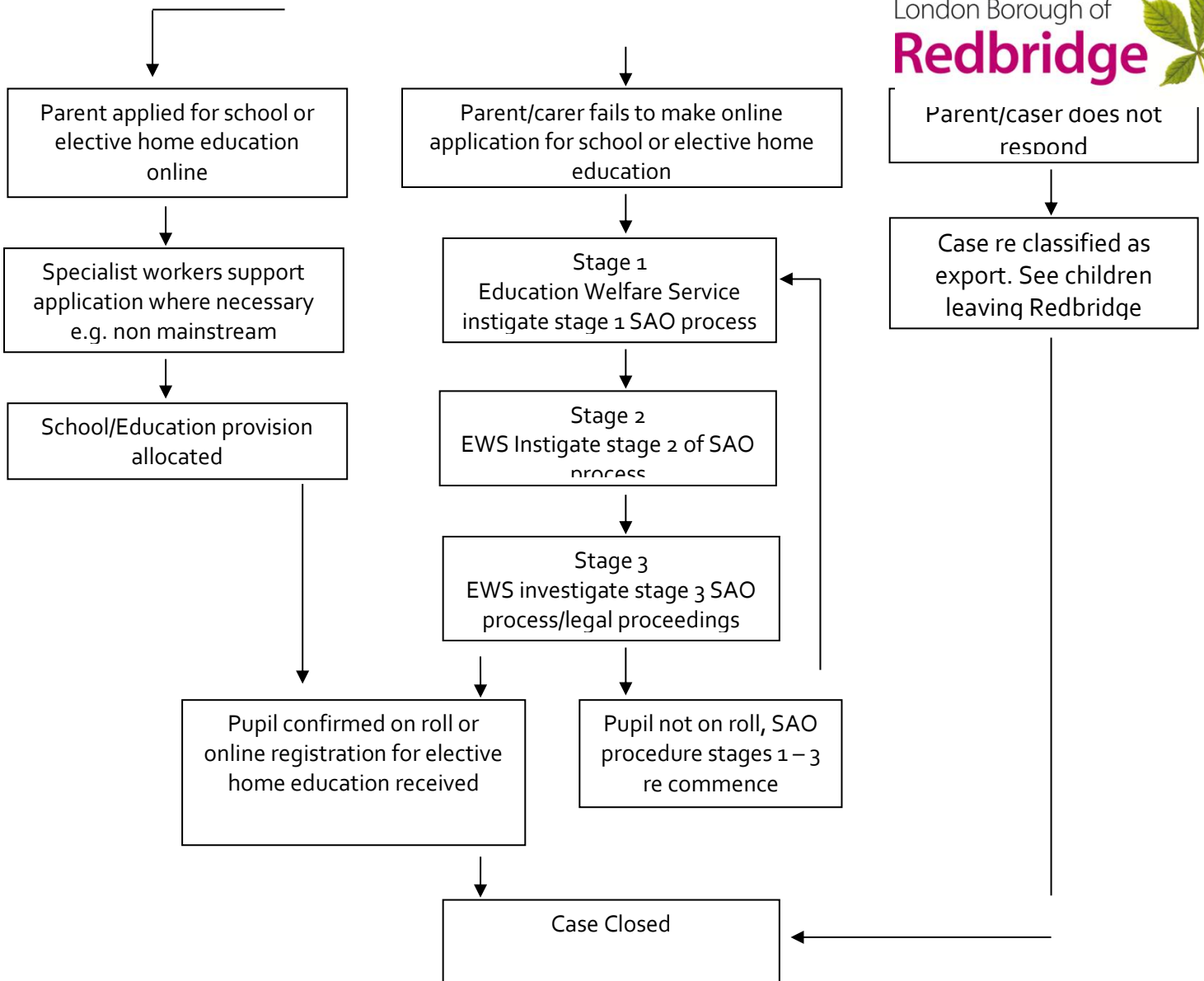




Appendix C

## Child In Area Believed To Be Missing Education





Appendix D

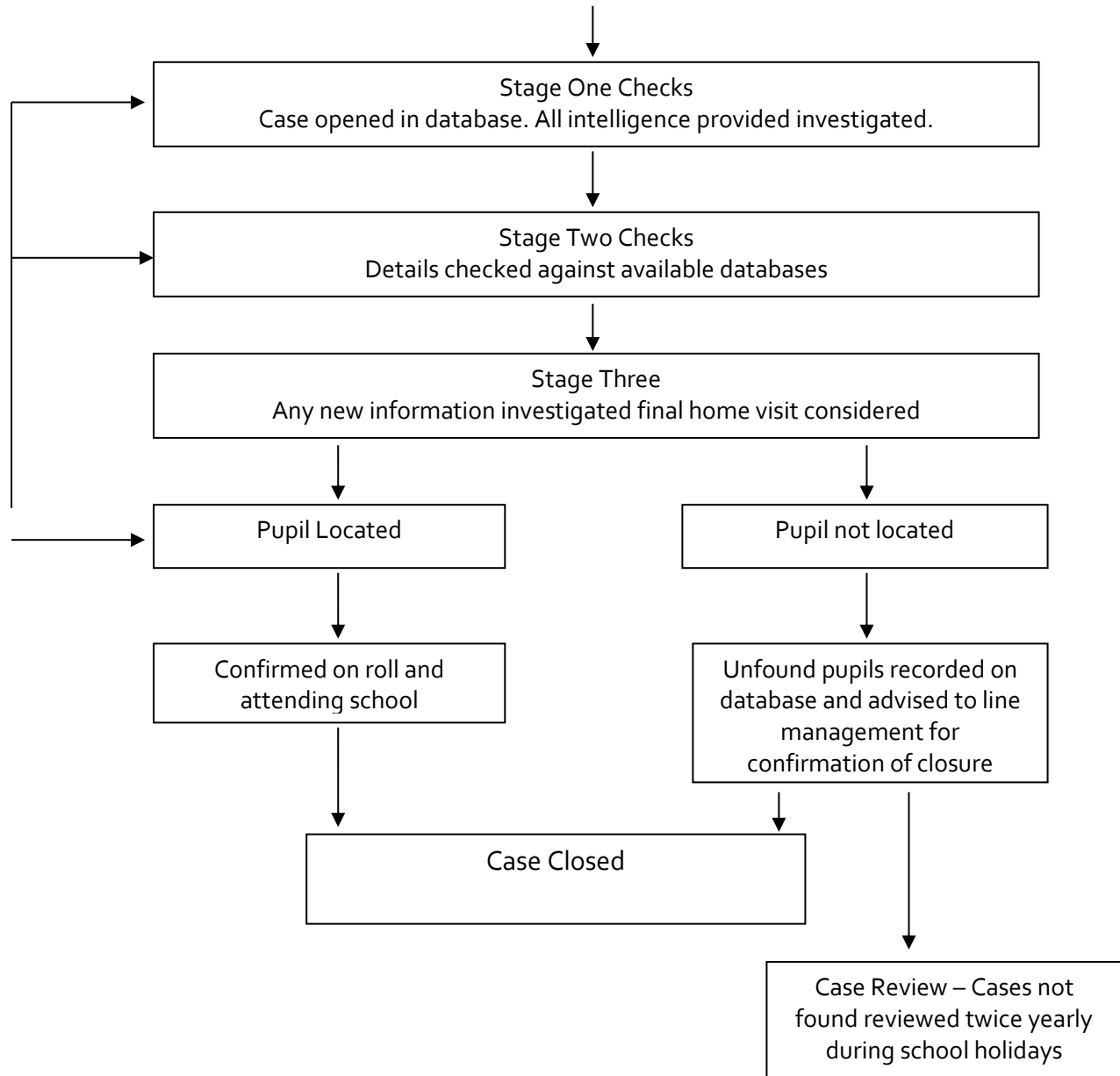
Children Leaving a Redbridge School Without a Destination

Pre referral action by school to include phone contact/ letters/ home visits.

***NB Referrals form must be fully completed to be accepted***

Referral screened on receipt & graded

RED AMBER GREEN



Appendix E

## Child(ren) Leaving School Notification

All sections to be completed **by parent/carer** when giving notice of child(ren) leaving Redbridge school

School to return form electronically with CME Referral to [cme@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:cme@redbridge.gov.uk)

First Name			
Last Name			
Date of birth		Gender	Ethnicity as shown on School records

Redbridge School				
Sibling(s) First Name	Last Name	Date of birth	Gender	Ethnicity as shown on school records
Current Address				
Sibling(s) Address If different				
Date leaving this address				
Responsible adult				
Contact Details	Phone Numbers			
	Email			
<b>Where is the pupil going</b>				
New Address				
Phone				
Email				
New School (Where Known)				
Phone				
Email				
Web Address				
<b>If leaving the UK</b>				
Date of departure				
Accompanying adult				
Place of departure e.g airport/dock				
Flight No./Ship Name & Final Destination				

**Thank you for your co-operation. Please be aware it is Redbridge Policy to confirm your child attending school at their intended destination. This is a safeguarding measure applicable to all students to ensure they have arrived safely and are receiving education in their new home.**

Standards, Achievement and Inclusion Chris Hilliard – Chief Officer  
 Education Welfare Service, Station Road Centre, Station Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1NB  
 In case of query please call: 0208 708 6047/0208 708 3838